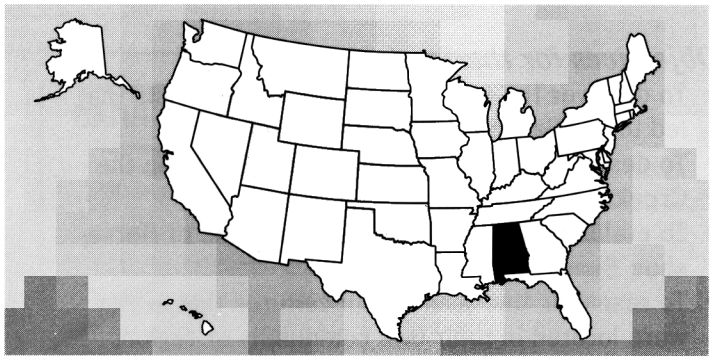
Teaching with Historic Places



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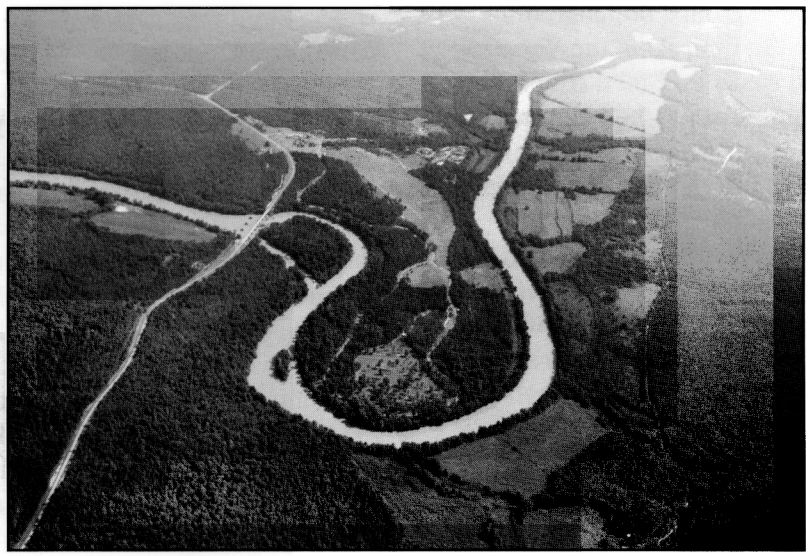
The Battle of Horseshoe Bend: Collision of Cultures

By Virginia Horak

Today the Tallapoosa River winds its way quietly through east-central Alabama, its banks edged by the remnants of the forest that once covered the Southeast. About halfway down its 270-mile journey southwest, the river curls back on itself to form a peninsula. The land defined by the Tallapoosa's "horseshoe bend" includes about 100 wooded acres, across which now run a looping two-lane road and a hiking trail. A finger of high ground points down the peninsula's center, and an island stands sentinel on its west side.



This tranquil setting belies the violence that cut across Horseshoe Bend on March 27, 1814. On the peninsula stood 1,000 American Indian warriors, members of the tribe European Americans knew as the Creek. These men, along with 350 women and children, had arrived over the last six months in search of refuge. Starting in the previous spring, they had fought a series of costly battles, hoping to regain the autonomy they held before European Americans had moved into the Southeast. Forces led by future President Andrew Jackson, then a major general of the Tennessee Militia, surrounded the Creek. The core of this force were 2,600 European American soldiers, most of whom believed that destroying the Creek would open their land to European American settlement. Yet this battle was not simply European American versus American Indian: fighting with Jackson were 600 "friendly" Indians, including 100 Creek.

The Battle of Horseshoe Bend, as it became known, illustrates three long-running conflicts in American history. It was yet another fight between European Americans and American Indians, in this case the decisive battle in the Creek War (1813-1814). The events of March 27 also provided an example of tensions among American Indians, even those in the same tribe. Finally, both Creek factions received support from white governments, continuing a long tradition of European nations attempting to defeat their rivals by enlisting the native population.

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file "Horseshoe Bend Battlefield," documents from archives at Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, and other resources. Materials for students include: (1) readings drawn from primary and secondary sources, (2) modern and historical maps of the Creek homelands and the battlefield, and (3) a drawing of a barricade used by the Creek. The lesson could be used in units on American Indian culture, early 19th-century westward expansion, the War of 1812, and the Jacksonian Era.

Horseshoe Bend as it appears today. (Horseshoe Bend National Military Park)

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Objectives for the Students

- To discover the political and cultural conflicts that led to the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.
- To describe the battle's long-term effects on the Creek.
- To evaluate historical maps of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.
- To research American Indian cultures that are or were located in their own community or region.

Teaching Activities

Setting the Stage

Remind students that before European exploration and settlement there were perhaps two million American Indians living in what is now the southeastern United States. This area, bounded roughly by the Tennessee River and the Appalachians, the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and East Texas, contained as many as 100 different tribes. Although exact practices varied, these native populations produced most of their food through farming; they supplemented their crops by fishing and hunting.

By 1776, five indigenous groups dominated the region. Three of them—the Cherokee, the Choctaw, and the Chickasaw—can easily be called tribes, since each had a distinct and long-established cultural pattern and thought of themselves as "Cherokee," or "Choctaw," or "Chickasaw." The fourth, the Seminole, developed out of remnants of several tribes who migrated into Florida after its original inhabitants had died from disease or battle. Members of the fifth group, and the most important for this story, were called the Creek. Rather than a unified cultural group, they were a political confederacy of approximately 50 villages throughout Georgia and Alabama.

Over time European Americans came to call these groups the "Five Civilized Tribes." This label neatly indicated their attitudes, since what made the tribes "civilized" in European eyes was that they lived more like European Americans than most American Indians. A 1961 excavation of a Creek town, for example, found remnants of numerous foods of European origin: the shell of a chicken egg; the bones of pigs, chickens, and cows; and peach pits. The Creek—and most other tribes—also avidly acquired firearms, iron tools, and other manufactured materials they found beneficial. American Indians combined these items with traditional ones: the dig also uncovered remains of indigenous animals like deer, turtle, and turkey. Cultural practices from Europe had a smaller impact on indigenous society. Although some southeastern Indians adopted Christianity and learned to speak English, the vast majority continued to prefer their own religions and languages.

By the turn of the 19th century, European American society increasingly pressed in on the Creek. Two issues in particular created tensions. First, many Creek worried that European influences would destroy their traditional values. The second problem revolved around land. Not only did European Americans appear to have an insatiable appetite for it, but their belief in private property differed dramatically from the Creek practice of collective ownership. Complicating these conflicts were other external ones: those between the Creek and other tribes, especially the Cherokee, and those involving the U.S. and European nations.

Locating the Site

Point out the Southeast on a wall map of the United States, emphasizing Georgia and Alabama. Then have students study Map 1, and tell them that it shows the heart of Creek territory. Ask students to make a list of towns and waterways that have Indian names and a second list of places that have English names. (Students may expect "Peter McQueen's" to be an English town, but it was named after a Creek trader with a European American father.) Ask students what the major Creek sites have in common (all located on rivers or creeks), then ask why these sites might have been chosen (transportation, fresh water, fishing). What do the European sites have in common? (They are removed from the area of heavy Creek settlement; almost all are forts.) Have them underline the sites of Burnt Corn Creek, Pensacola, Mobile, Ft. Mims, Ft. Jackson, Horseshoe Bend, and the Tallapoosa and Coosa Rivers, and explain that those sites figured prominently in the battles that occurred between 1813 and 1814 during the Creek Civil War. As an aside, tell the students that the town of Nuyaka (also spelled Newyaucau) was named for the Treaty of New York, a 1790 agreement between President George Washington and Creek leader Alexander McGillivray, in which the U.S. government promised that its settlers would no longer encroach on Creek lands. (McGillivray's name may prompt questions. European Americans saw McGillivray as a *mestizo*, someone who had both European and American Indian ancestors. To the Creek, however, he was Creek, since his mother was Creek.)

Next have students examine Map 2. Have them find the site most likely to be named Horseshoe Bend, and then refer back to Map 1 to remind them where this spot is located within the larger region. Tell them that one group of Creek Indians chose to make the Horseshoe Bend peninsula, particularly the area labeled "Tohopeka Village," their military base, and

ask them whether it would provide a good defensive position in case of attack. (The river protects the land on three sides and the narrow neck of the peninsula would require few defenses, but the defenders could not easily escape if the battle turned against them.) Have students keep copies of these maps handy as they study the readings.

Determining the Facts

Reading 1: The Creek People

Have students complete the reading and answer the following questions:

1. How did the Creek receive their name? What does its origin say about British attitudes toward the native population? (Most had trouble making sophisticated distinctions among American Indians.)
2. How did contact with European Americans affect the southeastern Indians (disease, land losses, cultural changes, internal disagreements)?
3. Why did Indians adopt elements of European American culture?
4. What were some of the important divisions within the Creek confederacy?
5. Why wasn't there a unified Creek nation?
6. What gradual developments and immediate events led to the Creek Civil War?

Reading 2: Four Views of European American/ American Indian Relations

Have students complete the reading and answer the following questions:

1. Why, according to General Jackson, did American Indians negotiate treaties?
2. Who are the "other sources" Jackson said settlers would turn to if the U.S. government did not help them fight the Indians?
3. How did Thomas Jefferson think the policy of "civilization" would help European American settlement?
4. What events did Tecumseh refer to in order to get the Cherokee to join him? Why?
5. What method did Tecumseh advocate to stop European American expansion?
6. What reasons did the Creek chiefs give for not joining Tecumseh?
7. How did Jackson's and Tecumseh's views of the origins of European American/American Indian conflict compare?

Reading 3: The Battle of Horseshoe Bend and Its Consequences

Have students keep Map 3 handy as they complete the reading and answer the following questions:

1. Why did Red Stick leaders, even with 2,000 fewer soldiers, believe they could score a victory over U.S. troops?
2. What was Jackson's reaction to the Creek barricade?
3. What two events turned the battle to Jackson's advantage? (American Indians allied with Jackson transported men across the river, and Jackson dared a direct assault on the barricade.)
4. Why do you think the militia and its Indian allies were so brutal toward the peninsula's defenders? (Both had long-standing conflicts with the Red Sticks—have students refer back to Reading 1 for details.)
5. What were the terms of the Treaty of Fort Jackson? Were the Lower Creek rewarded for assisting the U.S.?
6. What did Jackson's popularity reveal about European American attitudes toward American Indians during the early 19th century? Do you think someone with experiences and beliefs like his could become president today? Why or why not?

Visual Evidence

Explain to students that today there is no visible trace of the once impressive Creek barricade and no obvious signs that bustling Creek towns and communities once thrived around the Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River. The barricade was destroyed; the towns and villages were pillaged and burned. Even though the landscape now stands silent, historical documents, archeological excavations, and scientific testing provide information that scholars can analyze to help them understand what happened at Horseshoe Bend.

Have students study Drawing 1. Scholars know that the barricade was five to eight feet high and ran in a zigzag fashion across the peninsula, and that the defenders arranged logs around the barricade to make the defenses even harder to approach. Studies suggest that the barricade was probably designed by Red Eagle, who was familiar with defensive works at Mobile and Pensacola. Ask students which of its elements would have made it part of an effective defense. (Thick walls; pointed logs that make scaling the front difficult; loopholes to fire from.) Then have them consider whether such a fortification would be effective today. Which elements would modern technology render useless? What parts would still work?

Then give students Maps 3 and 4. Ask them to compare the two depictions of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and answer the following questions: Why can these be described as primary documents? (They

were drawn shortly after the event by participants in the battle.) Which map is easiest to read and understand? Which map provides the greatest amount of information? Historians have determined that approximately 300 wooden huts stood in the toe of the peninsula. Does it matter that neither map shows nearly that many? Why or why not? Which map is most in accord with the description of the battle found in Reading 3? How would you decide if the maps are accurate?

Putting It All Together

The Battle of Horseshoe Bend was one result of the spread of Europeans west from the Atlantic Ocean. It documented many of the conflicts that developed as European Americans and American Indians came into contact—battles over land and culture that occurred not just in the Southeast but across North America. Help students to understand this complicated period of America's history by completing some of the following activities.

Activity 1: Cultural Conflict

Help the students gain perspective on the Creek's last major battle to preserve their land and their independence. Have them work in groups of four or five to discuss the question, "What choices did the Creek have?" Have them review Readings 1-3 and examine their textbooks to learn more about European American/American Indian relations. Then ask them to list possible strategies the Creek could have followed and the advantages and disadvantages of each. Then ask them which option was the best, making sure to ask how they define "best."

End the activity by having students consider whether battles like Horseshoe Bend are inevitable. Create new groups, and assign each one to research a current world conflict. Ask students to use newspapers, magazines, and other sources to list the histories, goals, and justifications of each side. After they have presented their information to the class, have students write a short position paper which examines the statement: "War and aggression are inevitable components of human behavior." Then have the class compare current events with Horseshoe Bend.

Activity 2: What Else Was Happening?

Students often have trouble placing events such as the Battle of Horseshoe Bend into the broad developments of American history. To help them develop this skill, have them read the following list:

1793 Eli Whitney improves the cotton gin
1796 Tennessee becomes a state
1803 Louisiana Purchase
1803-1815 Napoleonic Wars in Europe
1808 End of legal slave importation
1811 Steamboat service begins on the Mississippi River
1817 Mississippi becomes a state
1819 Alabama becomes a state

Break students into groups of four to six. Ask them to decide whether these events were connected to Horseshoe Bend and, if so, how. Did these events help cause the battle? Did they illustrate long-term trends that also affected the battle? Were they connected in some other way? If necessary, have them reread sections of their textbooks to get more information. After they have worked in their groups, have them discuss their answers with the rest of the class, making sure to have them explain why they decided what they did. (Answers might mention some of the following: Whitney's refinements made raising cotton profitable over a much broader area, including Creek lands; the formation of the three states illustrated the Southeast's growing European American population, even before the battle; previous experience with Europeans first led American Indians to expect continuing European assistance, but the return of Napoleon caused the British to choose not to provide the help they had promised; the Louisiana Purchase and steamboat service show how the U.S. government's control was spreading west.)

Activity 3: The Trail of Tears

Reading 3 only briefly describes events in the two decades following the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Have students research what happened to the Creek confederacy between 1815-1836 so they better understand how government policy developed in the years leading to the Trail of Tears. Subjects of particular interest include:

1. How far did various Creek *talwas* go toward adopting European culture? Why?
2. How did what happened to the Creek after 1815 compare with what happened to other nations, particularly the Cherokee?
3. How do these events fit with the idea of "Jacksonian Democracy"?

Activity 4: Discovering Traces of Local American Indian Culture

Have students separate into small groups to research the names of towns and cities in their immediate region to see if any of them are derived from original American Indian inhabitants. Local historical societies often have material that will provide this informa-

tion. Then have students compare local American Indian names with those found within the region of Horseshoe Bend. Are they similar in any way? Have students further research to find out if any European American/American Indian battles took place in their area. If so, have them determine if the causes and effects were similar in any way to the Creek's stand at Horseshoe Bend. If not, have them determine how the United States obtained the land they live on, and then compare that acquisition with the way in which the U.S. acquired Creek lands. If there are local tribes, invite a representative to speak to the class. Finally, ask the students to discuss whether the tribes should receive compensation because of past government treaty violations. Why or why not? If so, what should it be?

Visiting the Site

Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, administered by the National Park Service, is located in east-central Alabama on Highway 49, 12 miles north of Dadeville and 18 miles northeast of Alexander City. For more information, write the Superintendent, Horseshoe Bend National Military Park, 11288 Horseshoe Bend Road, Daviston, AL 36256-9751.

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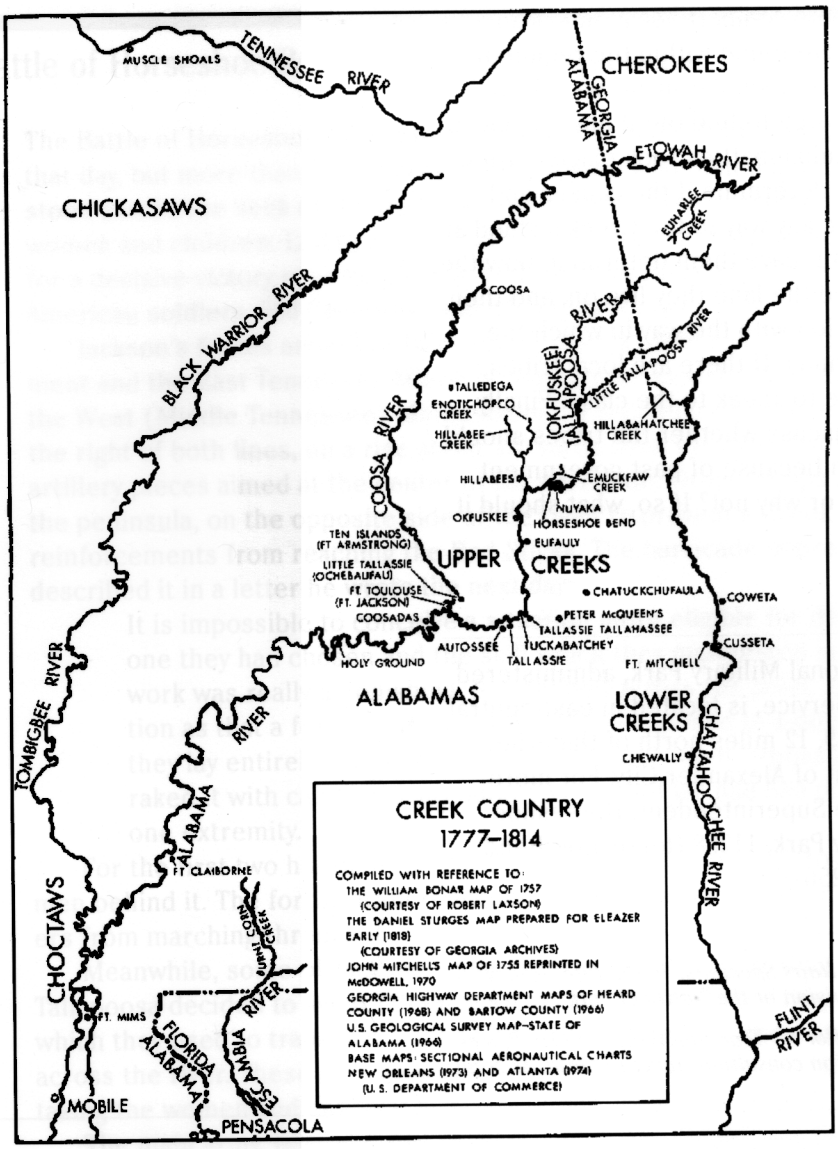
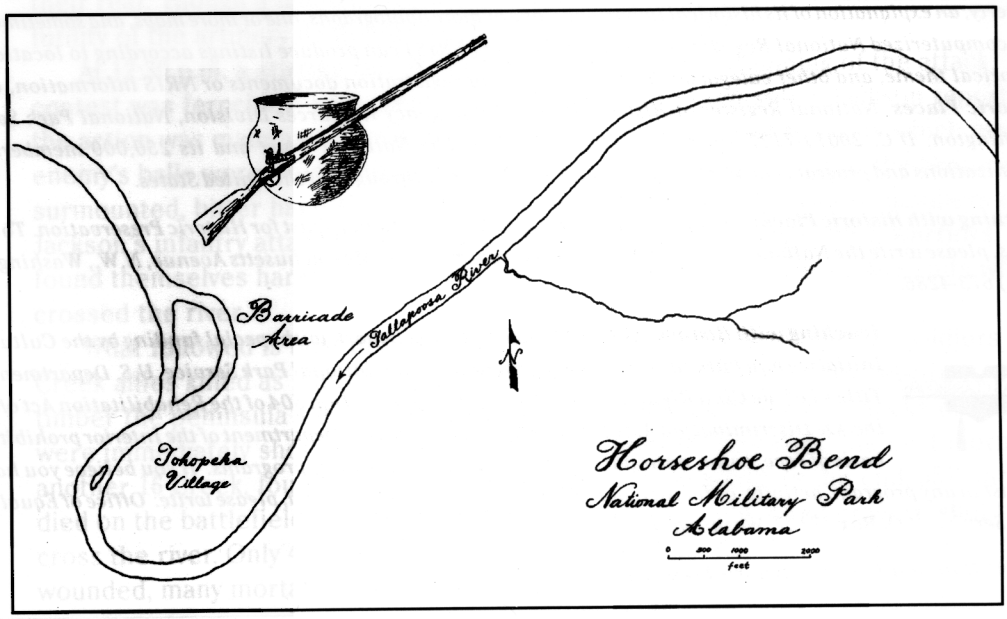
Map 1

Creek country during the period 1777-1814. (Courtesy of the Alabama Archaeological Society. Map by James McKinley)



Map 2

Horseshoe Bend. (Courtesy of the Alabama Archaeological Society. Map by Roy S. Dickens, Jr.)



Reading 1: The Creek People

Around 1680 English traders started talking and writing about the "Creek" Indians. They first applied this name to the people who lived near Ochesee Creek in northern Georgia, where there was an active trade of European manufactured goods for deerskins. Over time these American Indians moved west toward the Chattahoochee River (see Map 1), but the English still referred to the "Ochesee Creeks," or simply "Creeks." European Americans gradually applied the shortened name to American Indians from many different tribes in present-day Georgia and Alabama. Sometimes they divided the Creek into "Lower" and "Upper": the former applied to those who lived farther south and east, while the latter referred to the people near the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers.

It is not difficult to understand why most European Americans mistakenly treated dozens of tribes as a homogeneous group. These American Indians did, after all, live in the same section of the Southeast, a fat "L"-shaped area beginning in northwestern Alabama and extending south to the Florida border and east to central Georgia. They followed the same lifestyle: primarily farming before the mid-18th century, after that relying on commercial hunting for deerskins. The tribes that composed the Creek participated in a loose political confederation in which one tribe generally supported another in time of war. Finally, these Indians clearly differed from the region's other powerful tribes, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw. Since European Americans did recognize this last difference, during negotiations the Creek occasionally used the name the British had applied to them to differentiate themselves from the other American Indians.

Practices little known to European Americans created some unity within the Creek confederacy. Representatives from towns, or *talwas*, met regularly to make decisions for the confederacy. Annual festivals and athletic contests also brought *talwas* together. Particularly important was the clan system, which ran throughout the various tribes. Every child became a part of one of these groups, all of which were named after an element of nature. If a member of the Wind clan, for example, traveled to a different village, the members of the Wind clan there took care of him.

Even with these shared experiences, however, American Indians rarely called themselves Creek. That word suggested a degree of unity most people did not feel. Even into the 19th century they described themselves as members of one of the region's roughly 50 *talwas,* or as part of one of the tribes that composed the Creek: they said they were Coweta, for example, or Alabama or Tuskegee.

Other factors limited unity among the Creek confederacy. First, the constant attempts of Georgia's government to obtain more land tended to divide the Lower Creek, who were generally closer to European American settlement, from the Upper Creek, who lived in Alabama. Second, and perhaps more significant, were differences in language and culture. There existed a deep split between those tribes who considered themselves "Muskogee" and those who did not. Muskogee originally indicated American Indians who had migrated from the west and spoke the same language, but by the 18th century it referred to a set of cultural practices. Muskogee condescension toward non-Muskogee created tensions that grew for centuries. By the 18th century, Muskogees tended to be Lower Creek, while those who followed the other practices were generally Upper Creek.

European Americans affected the Creek in ways that reached far beyond renaming them. Between 1539 and 1543, Spaniard Hernando de Soto led the first European exploration of the region, a trip that began a dramatic decrease in the native population. Though wars killed some, most American Indians in the region died from European diseases such as smallpox. Though exact figures will never be known, the number of Indians around 1800 has been estimated as only one-fifth its pre-1500 level. This decline drastically reduced their ability to resist the ever-increasing European American population.

Rivalries between European nations also affected the Creek. Before the French and Indian War (1754-1763), the Creek found themselves bordered by the British to the east, the Spanish to the south, and the French to the west. At various times during the 18th century, each country tried to gain the Creek as allies in battles against their European rivals. For example, in 1704 the governor of South Carolina recruited 50 English and 1,000 Creek soldiers, who together destroyed Ayubale, Spain's strongest settlement in Florida.

Even though the Creek occasionally found alliances profitable, overall they refrained from involving themselves in non-Indian conflicts. The Revolutionary War provided an example of this behavior: though they preferred the British, few Creek fought. During periods without overt conflicts, officials often gave lavish gifts in order to keep the peace. In the first part of the 18th century both the French and the British sent the chief of the Coweta frequent shipments of manufactured goods; at different times after 1776, the U.S. and the Spanish in Florida each paid Creek leader Alexander McGillivray in the hope of gaining allies.

At times the Creek did go to war. Sometimes they battled other tribes, particularly the Cherokee, with whom they had a long-running feud. They generally fought European Americans only when they felt threatened. For example, they declared war on the U.S. in 1786 only after white settlers continued to move into territory that treaties had promised to the Creek.

Around the turn of the 19th century, several events increased tensions between *and* among European Americans and American Indians. Although the Louisiana Purchase supposedly gave the United States control of land from the Atlantic to the Rockies, in reality American authority was limited. Frontier families felt threatened both by the British and by Indians from many tribes, and they often believed with some justification that those two worked together to undermine U.S. interests. Rapid settlement with loyal citizens, the U.S. government thought, would help assert its control and protect its citizens. Obtaining the necessary land, however, required dealing with the Indians who controlled that area. Often these negotiations spurred hostilities, since the U.S. frequently forced tribes to give up lands guaranteed to them by previous treaties.

Thomas Jefferson's policy of "civilizing" American Indians caused further difficulty. As president, Jefferson advocated remaking them into his ideal for Americans: they should be small farmers, each with his own small plot of land. Tribal lands previously used for hunting would become available for sale to European American settlers spreading west. American Indians would gradually learn not only to farm like European Americans, but to live like them, including adopting Christianity and English.

Since first contact few American Indians had completely rejected European culture. All but the most traditional agreed that European foods and technology improved aspects of their lives, and so pigs, poultry, pears, peaches, horses, guns, and iron tools all gradually became part of daily life. Marriages between white men and Creek women were not uncommon; some of the children these unions produced even led *talwas*.

Yet most Creek wanted to keep traditional ways. Though they might learn English, they generally spoke their own languages. Most preferred their religion and festivals over Christianity. They believed the tribe, not the individual, should control property, and that much of the land should remain as forest. In the woods the Creek could hunt the deer whose skins they traded to the Europeans for manufactured goods.

Concerns over land and European American culture extended beyond the Creek. Throughout the Ohio and Tennessee river valleys, tribes discussed how to respond to European American culture and land acquisition. In the early 1800s a movement historians have called "Pan-Indianism" gradually arose. Led by the Shawnee leader Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa, who was also known as the Prophet, it argued that to stop

further European American expansion all tribes had to put aside past differences and work together. The two men, who were based in what is today Ohio, recruited other tribes to join in armed resistance against European American encroachment.

The Creek differed over how to respond to Pan-Indianism. In general the Lower Creek, who had more contact with European Americans, rejected Tecumseh's call. They believed they could continue to adapt to European American ways and were not prepared to fight a long war against the much larger American population.

Many Upper Creek also turned Tecumseh down, but some wanted to fight. One of their leaders was Red Eagle (William Weatherford), the nephew of a former *mestizo* (someone who had both European and American Indian ancestors) chief who had tried to unify the confederacy in the late 18th century. Red Eagle and the other Creek followers of Tecumseh became known as "Red Sticks," a name whose basis remains unclear. One possible explanation is based on the Creek practice of categorizing *talwas* as "white," which meant they supplied peace negotiators, or as "red," which meant they supplied warriors. The red towns counted out sticks as a way to determine the proper date to commence battle. Other historians have suggested that Red Sticks refers to the war clubs Tecumseh's party carried.

During 1813 a civil war between the Upper and Lower Creek began. A group of Red Sticks who had just visited Tecumseh killed seven European American settlers in Tennessee. To prevent a war with the Americans, the Creek council ordered the murderers hunted down and executed. That action enraged the Red Sticks, who stopped at a Spanish trading post in Pensacola to obtain weapons for retaliation against the Lower Creek. However, they received no new guns, only powder and shot for those they already had.

A Mississippi militia quickly began to pursue the Red Sticks and surprised them at Burnt Corn Creek. This inconclusive battle's main effect was to anger the Red Sticks further when they found that among the militia men were many Lower Creek. Led by Red Eagle, the Red Sticks responded by attacking Fort Mims in southern Alabama. Their attack on this stockade killed 250 people, some of whom were women and children. Although most of the dead were Lower Creek cooperating with settlers and their government, there were enough European Americans among the dead to provide an excuse for state militias and the U.S. government to declare war on the Red Sticks.

The War of 1812 provided further justification for attacking the Red Sticks. Many European Americans, particularly those living near the frontier, saw battles such as the one at Fort Mims as additional examples of European nations stirring up trouble through American Indian allies. They were convinced that it was only a matter of time before the British, as part of their attempt to win the War of 1812, also started passing out weapons to the Upper Creek.

In the fall of 1813, Mississippi and Georgia militias made feeble attempts to put down the Red Sticks. Soon, however, Andrew Jackson organized his Tennessee militia for a full-scale campaign against the Creek. His soldiers realized a Creek defeat would open Creek lands for white settlement. After two autumn victories, however, the enlistments of many of Jackson's men expired. He therefore had to wait for more troops and supplies.

During the winter Red Stick warriors, along with some women and children, had come to Horseshoe Bend. There they hoped the encircling river, their religious leaders' magic, and a log barricade they had built across the neck of the peninsula would provide them protection.

Compiled from J. Leitch Wright, Creeks & Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People *(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); the National Park Service's visitor's guide for Horseshoe Bend National Military Park; William C. Sturtevant, ed.,* Handbook of North American Indians, *vol. 4,* History of Indian-White Relations *(Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), 35-37.*

Reading 2: Four Views of European American/American Indian Relations

The following excerpts reflect the attitudes of four people important in the conflicts between European American settlers moving west and the American Indians who had traditionally lived there.

Andrew Jackson to John McKee, 1794. (Spelling and punctuation modernized.)
I fear that their Peace Talks are only Delusions and in order to put us off our guard. Why treat with them? Does not experience teach us that Treaties answer no other purpose than opening an easy door for the Indians to pass [through to] butcher our citizens....Congress [should act] justly and punish the barbarians for murdering her innocent citizens; has not our [citizens] been prosecuted for marching to their [town] and killing some of them?...[The] Indians appear very troublesome [on the] frontier. [Settlers are] Discouraged and breaking and [num]bers [of them] leaving the Territory and moving [to] Kentucky. This country is declining [fast] and unless Congress lends us a more am[ple] protection this country will have at length [to break] or seek a protection from some other sources than the present.[1]

Thomas Jefferson on the policy of "civilization," 1803.
When they [American Indians] withdraw themselves to the culture of a small piece of land, they will perceive how useless to them are extensive forests and will be willing to pare them [pieces of land] off from time to time in exchange for necessities for their farms and families. Should any tribe be foolhardy enough to take up the hatchet at any time, the seizing of the whole country of that tribe and driving them across the Mississippi as the only condition of peace, would be an example to others and a furtherance of our final consolidation.[2]

In 1811 Tecumseh traveled through the Southeast, attempting to gain recruits for the Pan-Indian movement. The following is an excerpt from his speech to the Cherokee.
Everywhere our people have passed away, as the snow of the mountains melts in May. We no longer rule the forest. The game has gone like our hunting grounds. Even our lands are nearly all gone. Yes, my brothers, our campfires are few. Those that still burn we must draw together.

Behold what the white man has done to our people! Gone are the Pequot, the Narraganset, the Powhatan, the Tuscarora and the Coree.... We can no longer trust the white man. We gave him our tobacco and our maize. What happened? Now there is hardly land for us to grow these holy plants.

White men have built their castles where the Indians' hunting grounds once were, and now they are coming into your mountain glens. Soon there will be no place for the Cherokee to hunt the deer and the bear. The tomahawk of the Shawnee is ready. Will the Cherokee raise the tomahawk? Will the Cherokee join their brothers the Shawnee?[3]

Junaluska, Tochalee and Chuliwa were Cherokee chiefs. These were their responses to Tecumseh, 1811.
JUNALUSKA: It has been years, many years, since the Cherokee have drawn the tomahawk. Our braves have forgotten how to use the scalping knife. We have learned with sorrow it is better not to war against our white brothers.

We know that they have come to stay. They are like leaves in forest, they are so many. We believe we can live in peace with them. No more do they molest our lands. Our crops grow in peace....

Reading 2: Four Views of European American/American Indian Relations (continued)

TOCHALEE AND CHULIWA: After years of distress we found ourselves in the power of a generous nation.... We have prospered and increased, with the knowledge and practice of agriculture and other useful arts. Our cattle fill the forests, while wild animals disappear. Our daughters clothe us from spinning wheels and looms. Our youth have acquired knowledge of letters and figures. All we want is tranquility.[4]

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[1] *Original deteriorated. This version comes from John Spencer Bassett,* Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, *I (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1926), 12-13.*
[2] *Moses Dawson,* A Historical Narrative of the Civil and Military Service of Major General William Henry Harrison *(Cincinnati, 1824), 36.*
[3] *Original lost. This version quoted in W.C. Allen,* The Annals of Haywood County *(Waynesville, N.C.: 1935), 44-46.*
[4] *Allen, 44-46.*

Reading 3: The Battle of Horseshoe Bend and Its Consequences

The Battle of Horseshoe Bend was fought on March 27, 1814. Red Eagle was not present that day, but more than 1,000 Creek warriors were assembled behind the barricade that stood across the neck of the peninsula. In the toe of the peninsula were another 500 women and children. Led by a chief named Menawa and the prophet Monahee, they hoped for a decisive victory over Militia Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson's force of 2,600 European American soldiers, 500 Cherokee, and 100 Lower Creek.

Jackson's forces arrived at Horseshoe Bend at 10:30 a.m. The U.S. Army's 39th Regiment and the East Tennessee Militia formed a line opposite the barricade. To their rear, the West (Middle Tennessee) Militia formed a second parallel line. Well forward and to the right of both lines, on a rise about 250 yards from the breastwork, Jackson placed two artillery pieces aimed at the center of the barricade. Other troops surrounded the toe of the peninsula, on the opposite side of the river, to prevent a Creek retreat and to keep reinforcements from reaching the Red Sticks. The barricade impressed Jackson, who described it in a letter he wrote the next day:

> It is impossible to conceive a situation more eligible for defence than the one they had chosen and the skill which they manifested in their breastwork was really astonishing. It extended across the point in such a direction as that a force approaching would be exposed to a double fire, while they lay entirely safe behind it. It would have been impossible to have raked it with cannon to any advantage even if we had had possession of one extremity.[1]

For the first two hours of the battle, cannon shot plunged into the barrier, injuring the men behind it. The fortification remained strong enough, however, to prevent the attackers from marching through it.

Meanwhile, some of Jackson's American Indian allies guarding the south side of the Tallapoosa decided to swim 120 yards to the peninsula. There they stole Red Stick canoes, which they used to transport a mixed force of Cherokee, Creek, and Tennessee Militia across the river. These men attacked from the rear, burning the village of Tohopeka and taking the women and children living there prisoner.

The main army, however, was still blocked by the formidable breastwork. Jackson saw the smoke rising above Tohopeka Village and heard continuing small arms fire from the peninsula. He decided to assault the barricade directly while the Creek were diverted to their rear. Though a failed charge could destroy his army, Jackson concluded that the futility of the artillery bombardment left him no alternative.

At 12:30 p.m. a stirring roll of the drums signaled the beginning of the attack. The contest was ferocious, with great bravery displayed by both sides. Jackson reported that the action was maintained "muzzle to muzzle through the port holes, in which many of the enemy's balls were welded to the bayonets of our musquets...." Once the breastwork was surmounted, bitter hand-to-hand fighting ensued. Slowly, the superior numbers of Jackson's infantry attacking from the north overwhelmed the Red Stick warriors, who also found themselves harassed from behind by the Indians and other militia units who had crossed the river.

What followed is best described as a slaughter. European American soldiers and their Creek allies killed as many Red Sticks as possible. For example, they set fire to a heap of timber the peninsula's defenders had hidden behind; when the Red Sticks emerged, they were immediately shot down. The bloodshed continued until dark; the next morning another 16 Creek, found hidden under the banks, were killed. In the end, 557 warriors died on the battlefield and an estimated 250 to 300 more drowned or were shot trying to cross the river. Only 49 Tennessee militia men died that day, but another 154 were wounded, many mortally. Fewer than a dozen "friendly" Creek also died.

Reading 3: The Battle of Horseshoe Bend and Its Consequences (continued)

Among the militia was 21-year-old ensign Sam Houston, later governor of Tennessee and president of the Republic of Texas. Years later he described the results of the battle:

> The sun was going down, and it set on the ruin of the Creek nation. Where, but a few hours before a thousand brave...[warriors] had scowled on death and their assailants, there was nothing to be seen but volumes of dense smoke, rising heavily over the corpses of painted warriors, and the burning ruins of their fortifications.[2]

The Battle of Horseshoe Bend effectively ended the Creek War. In August Jackson went against orders from Washington and single-handedly negotiated the Treaty of Fort Jackson, which forced the Creek to cede almost 20 million acres—nearly half their territory—to the U.S. Although most of the land the U.S. government took had been held by Red Sticks, the territory also included many villages and a great deal of hunting land held by friendly Creek. (In the 1960s the Creek won a judicial decision that provided compensation to the heirs of those whose land was taken unfairly.)

Surprisingly, Red Eagle, who was not at Horseshoe Bend, was one of the Creek who made out well after the war. When he surrendered to Jackson, he received a promise of safe passage for Red Stick women and children, most of whom were now ill and hungry. It appears this deal with Jackson also allowed Red Eagle to retain his farm in southern Alabama.

Horseshoe Bend was not the last conflict between Jackson and the Creek. Rather than surrender, some Upper Creek fled to northern Florida where they allied themselves with the Seminole. For a brief time they received weapons from the British, but in 1814 England decided to concentrate on defeating Napoleon and stopped sending supplies. The Seminole continued to fight European American settlement anyway, first as part of the War of 1812, then in what became known as the First Seminole War (1818-1819). In 1818 Jackson led an army into Florida, then claimed by Spain, to stop the Seminole from attacking border settlements and providing refuge for slaves. This campaign increased Jackson's popularity among American citizens because victories he won forced the Spanish to cede Florida to the United States. Many of the remaining American Indians moved into the Florida swamps.

After Horseshoe Bend the European American population of Georgia and Alabama continued to skyrocket. In the latter, for example, the non-Indian population rose from 9,000 in 1810 to 310,000 in 1830. Despite increasing pressure from European American settlers, however, the Creek resisted attempts to force them to sell their lands. When William McIntosh, a *mestizo* chief, attempted to sell the U.S. virtually all the remaining Creek territory in 1825, the Creek council voted to execute him. Leading the party that carried out this sentence was Menawa, who had survived the terrible injuries he had received at Horseshoe Bend to regain a position of leadership among both Lower and Upper Creek.

Yet ultimately the Creek could not hold back the flood of European Americans into their homeland. In 1829 Jackson became president, in part because of the popularity he had acquired from his victories over American Indians. He decided to adopt the Indian policy favored by most Southerners who wanted more land: move the remaining tribes west of the Mississippi to "Indian Territory," what today is Oklahoma. The Cherokee, the Chickasaw, the Choctaw, the Creek and the Seminole—the "Five Civilized Tribes"—each had treaties signed by the U.S. giving them control of their lands, and in 1831 the Supreme Court upheld the Cherokee land titles. But the Jackson Administration ignored these facts and forced the five tribes to move.

Responses to federal policy varied. The relocation of the five tribes became known collectively as the "Trail of Tears," because of the separation of the tribes from their

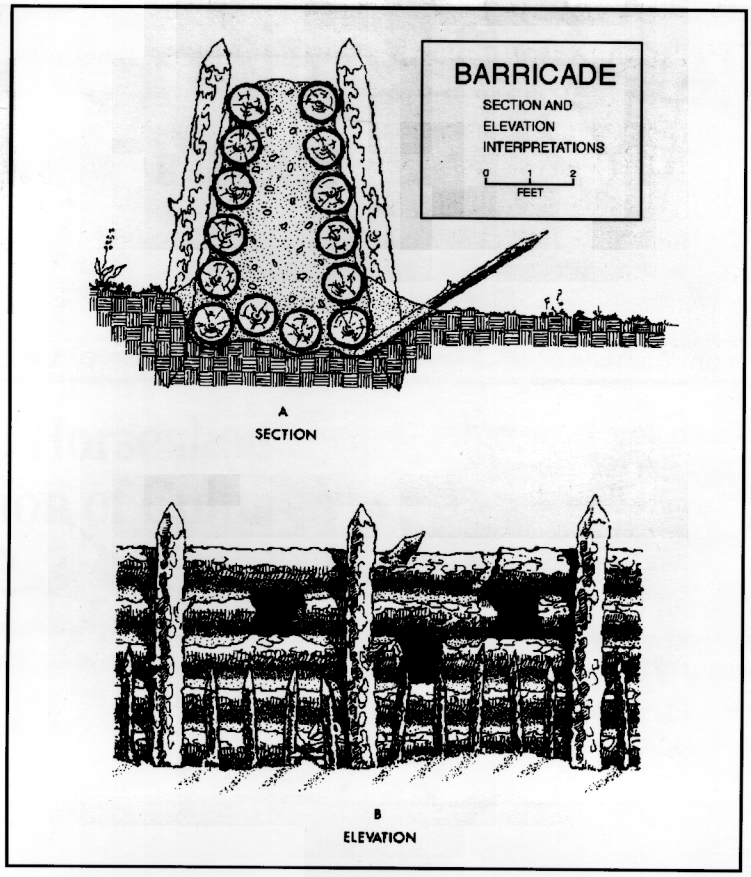
homelands and the many deaths that occurred during the trip. Perhaps as many as 25,000 Creek (including Menawa) reluctantly took part. Other Creek decided to move south and continue fighting the U.S. government. In Florida these Indians joined those Seminole who also refused to move; together they fought the Second Seminole War (1835-42). Finally, some Red Sticks slipped quietly into southwestern Alabama, joining other Creek who had moved there both before and after Horseshoe Bend. Today members of the dominant group in the area are known as "Poarch" Creek, a name whose origin is unclear.

Compiled from George C. Mackenzie, "The Indian Breastwork in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend: Its Size, Location, and Construction," National Park Service, 1969; the National Park Service's visitor's guide for Horseshoe Bend National Military Park; Donald Hickey, The War of 1812, A Forgotten Conflict *(Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); J. Leitch Wright,* Creeks & Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People *(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); J. Anthony Paredes, "Federal Recognition and the Poarch Creek Indians," in Paredes, ed.,* Indians of the Southeastern United States in the Late 20th Century *(Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 120-22.*

[1]*Jackson Papers, first series, vol. XVIII, doc. 1586, Library of Congress.*
[2]*Donald Day and Harry Herbert Ullom, eds.,* The Autobiography of Sam Houston *(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 12.*

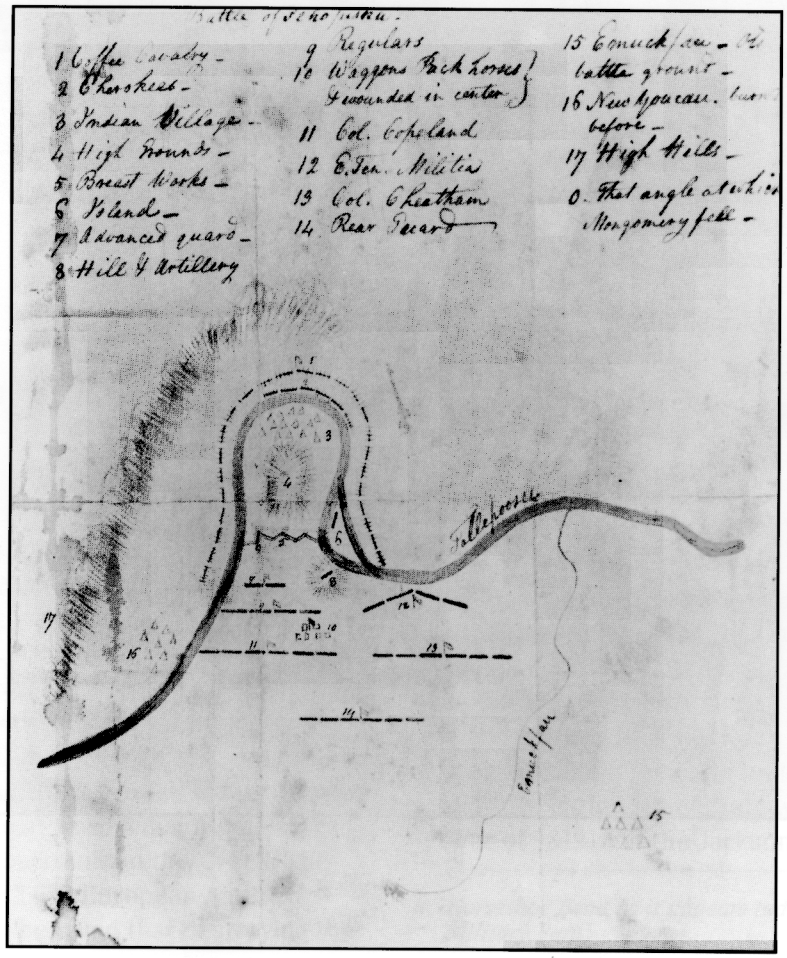
Drawing 1

Archeologists' conception of how the barricade at Horseshoe Bend was constructed. (Courtesy of the Alabama Archaeological Society. Drawing by James McKinley)



Map 3

Andrew Jackson's map of the battleground. (Courtesy of the Tennessee Historical Society)



Map 4

A map drawn by Colonel John A. Cheatham, Jackson's topographical engineer. (National Archives)